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REPORT

ON THE

VISIT TO THE SOVIET UNION

OF THE

SENATE DELEGATION LED BY

SENATOR JOHN HEINZ

EXPLORATION OF THE CONDITION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND "DEMOCRATIZATION" AND ECONOMIC REFORM INITIATIVES UNDERTAKEN BY THE SOVIET UNION

OCTOBER 1987

Printed for the use of the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

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VISIT TO THE SOVIET UNION OF THE CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION LED BY SENATOR JOHN HEINZ

OCTOBER 1987.—Ordered to be printed

Mr. HEINZ, from the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, submitted the following

REPORT

OVERVIEW OF DELEGATION VISIT

Senator John Heinz led a delegation on an official visit to the Soviet Union from May 22 to May 26, 1987. The delegation consisted of Senator Heinz and one staff assistant. The purpose of the visit was to investigate the following issues:

—the condition of human rights under the government of Soviet Communist Party General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev.

—the prospects for significant improvement in the area of human rights which could significantly affect bilateral relations and the atmosphere for increased U.S.-Soviet trade activity.

—the "democratization" and economic reform initiatives undertaken by the Soviet Government under General Secretary Gorbachev.

In order to gain insights into these issues, the delegation met with a wide array of private Soviet citizens and Soviet officials during a 4-day visit to Moscow. A maximum effort was made to exploit the opportunities for meetings with private Soviet human rights activists created by the limited releases of Soviet political prisoners in 1987.

The delegation arrived in Moscow on the evening of Friday, May 22, and was met by staff of the U.S. Embassy.

On the morning of May 23, the Embassy staff provided a briefing on various prominent issues in U.S.-Soviet relations, including bilateral discussions of human rights issues. Following the briefing, the delegation met with Metropolitan Philaret of Minsk, head of the External Relations Department of the Russian Orthodox

Church, to discuss religious freedom and the condition of the Orthodox Church in the Soviet Union.

Following this meeting, the delegation met with a group of Russian Orthodox clergy and lay people to discuss the status of religious freedom in the Soviet Union. The group included Father Gleb Yakunin, Father Zelinsky, Alexander Ogorodnikov, Vladimir Popov, and Alexander Bessmertniy. The meeting was held in the Popovs' apartment.

On Saturday evening, the delegation met with a group of Soviet Jewish refuseniks, people who have been denied permission to emigrate from the Soviet Union for a long period. The meeting included Vladimir and Maria Slepak of Moscow, Boris and Galina Kalendariov of Leningrad, Yuli Kosharovsky of Moscow, and Lev Elbert of Kiev. The meeting took place over dinner at the Slepaks' apartment.

On Sunday, May 24, the delegation met with a group of released political prisoners who are organizing an unofficial journal on human rights in the Soviet Union. The Soviet dissidents at this meeting included Sergei Gigoryants, Lev Timofeyev, Yuri Kronopolou, and Nikolai Lyushin. The meeting took place at Mr. Grigoryants' apartment.

On Monday, May 25, the delegation held a series of official meetings. In the morning, there was a meeting in the office of Alexander Bovin, international political commentator for the Soviet government newspaper *Izvestiya*. The discussion centered on the new Soviet policy of openness in the media.

Following the meeting with Bovin, the delegation met with Fyodor Burlatsky in his offices at the headquarters of the newspaper *Literaturnaya Gazyeta*, the organ of the Soviet writer's union, to discuss human rights, democratization, legal reform, and other aspects of current Soviet political change. Mr. Burlatsky's formal duties include serving as political commentator for *Literaturnaya Gazyeta* and chief of the philosophy department of the Communist Party Central Committee's Social Science Institute. Additionally, Mr. Burlatsky is believed to serve as an adviser to the Politburo on matters of political reform.

On Tuesday, May 26, the delegation held a round of meetings with various Soviet officials. The first meeting was with Roald Sagdeyev, Director of the Institute of Space Research of the Academy of Sciences. The discussion there focused on current U.S.-Soviet arms control talks and the subject of space-based strategic defenses.

The next meeting was with Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Bessmertnykh at the Soviet Foreign Ministry. This discussion covered the full array of U.S.-Soviet bilateral issues, with an emphasis on human rights matters that have historically affected trade and political relations. A broader discussion of the prospects for fundamental political and economic change under Mikhail Gorbachev also took place.

The final meeting of the visit was with Dmitri Lisovolik, chief of the American Section at the Communist Party Central Committee International Department. The meeting with Lisovolik was devoted to Soviet human rights issues of interest to the United States.

The delegation departed Moscow on May 26 shortly after the final meeting at the Central Committee offices.

The Current State of Human Rights in the Soviet Union

Four days in Moscow did not afford sufficient contact with Soviet society or individuals to confidently assess the exact condition of all human rights in all parts of the Soviet Union. However, the experience and leadership positions of the private citizens involved in the meetings brought a breadth of knowledge and perspective which added greatly to the value of the insights gained while in Moscow.

Following is an assessment, based on discussions with Soviet officials and private citizens, of the current status of certain human rights practices in the Soviet Union.

Emigration

Of the various Soviet human rights practices which receive significant attention in the West, the one which figures specifically in United States law affecting trade between the U.S. and the Soviet Union is the right of free emigration. The most important such legal restriction is the Jackson-Vanik amendment, which conditions the granting of Most Favored Nation status to the Soviet Union on the achievement higher levels of Jewish emigration from the U.S.S.R.

During the Moscow visit, the issue of free emigration figured prominently in both private and official meetings. The delegation met with two groups of Soviet citizens who have applied for permission to leave the Soviet Union.

The first group consisted of long-term Jewish refuseniks, who gathered at the Moscow apartment of Vladimir and Maria Slepak. Each of the Soviets present was able to tell stories that are familiar to those who follow the plight of refuseniks—loss of appropriate employment, police harassment, imprisonment, the pain of separation from family members.

If there were a concensus among the members of this group, it was that long-term refuseniks had noted an improvement in tone but not substance on the part of the Soviet Government. They agreed that government officials who normally would not talk with them or even refuse them entry to their offices had generally displayed a much less hostile, more business-like attitude when accepting documents and discussing specific emigration cases.

The long-term refusenik community is of course keenly aware of the rise in the Soviet Jewish monthly emigration figures in the first half of 1987. But this rise in exit visas has not, in the view of the group that met the delegation, changed the basic approach of the Soviet Government to the emigration question. They characterized that approach as one which views Jews and others who wish to emigrate as commodities to be traded for Western good will.

The diversity of backgrounds of the group which met the delegation demonstrated a key feature of Soviet emigration policy: arbitrariness. While most of those present had been refused on grounds of state secrecy, that was clearly an implausible reason to deny them exit visas. But applying the standard of state security on a random basis does serve the purpose of confirming the state's unlimited power, and denying the refusenik community any basis for forming expectations about their cases.

One member of the group, Yuli Kosharovsky, illustrated that arbitrariness and inconsistency are not limited to the exit visa process. Mr. Kosharovsky, who has been imprisoned for organizing Hebrew instruction and is a long-term refusenik, nonetheless holds one of the few private enterprise permits in Moscow. Under General Secretary Gorbachev's new economic initiatives, Soviet citizens can purchase a private enterprise permit that allows them to operate a private business. Mr. Kosharovsky repairs foreign-made consumer electronic equipment, a business that appears to have great potential in Moscow. This activity is allowed despite the fact that Kosharovsky has not been allowed to work at an appropriate level in his field since he applied to emigrate in 1971.

Two major developments concerning Soviet emigration have been the promulgation of a new decree on emigration and the establishment of a special review board to which refuseniks can appeal. The second development is surrounded by uncertainty and unconfirmed reporting. One of the refuseniks who met the delegation, Lev Elbert of Kiev, has spent considerable time attempting to identify the make-up and functions of the review commission.

According to Elbert's investigations, the commission is an ad-hoc interagency body with representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the KGB, and other unidentified domestic government agencies, and operates under the aegis of the Supreme Soviet, the Soviet legislative branch. But these and all other facts about the commission, even its actual existence, remain purely speculative. So far as is known to the Moscow refusenik community, no cases reviewed by the commission have led to the release of long-term refuseniks.

A Soviet community whose emigration efforts have received relatively scant attention is the Pentecostalist Christians. Members of various ethnic groups from throughout the Soviet Union, the Pentecostals lack the common national or ethnic heritage that has so far allowed some Jews, Volga Germans, and Armenians to emigrate from the U.S.S.R.

The delegation met with a group of Pentecostalists who have been attempting to emigrate for 10 years or more. Vasiliy Barats, his wife Galina, and their host Ivan Lupachev discussed the Pentecostalists' emigration problems with the delegation at Mr. Lupachev's apartment on May 24. The meeting was the only one during the 4 days in Moscow in which the surveillance of the KGB was overt.

Mr. Barats first applied to emigrate in 1977. His conflict with Soviet authorities had begun before this, owing to the status of Pentecostals in the Soviet Union, a subject discussed below under the rubric of religious freedom. Barats and other Pentecostals petitioned Politburo members, the Supreme Soviet, and the 26th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party asking permission to emigrate. One such petition listed approximately 500 names from 50 families.

Many Pentecostalists have been promised exit visas several times, but only a few were actually let out of the Soviet Union, during the 1970's. Activists such as Barats have been imprisoned for their pursuit of emigration rights. Barats was released from prison camp about a month before meeting the delegation. He was

jailed in 1981 along with seven other Pentecostals who formed the Committee for Emigration Rights in the U.S.S.R.

In discussions with Deputy Foreign Minister Bessmertnykh and Central Committee official Mr. Lisovolik, the delegation did not receive any information or assurances that would justify expectations of an improvement in Soviet emigration practices. Both officials stressed that they had improved various human rights practices, and intended to do more, in order to correct past mistakes and build a better society, and not in response to Western pressure.

Consistent with the reported pattern in the last year, the Soviet officials accepted the delegation's lists of emigration cases and other human rights cases without the resistance or acrimonious exchanges that formerly characterized Soviet responses to such lists.

Although Senator Heinz presented the specific cases in detail in each meeting, the only assurances received were that the officials promised to provide the Senator with an "update" of the status of each refusenik.

Nothing heard by the delegation while in Moscow indicates that a fundamental change is underway in Soviet emigration policies. Permission to leave the Soviet Union is still treated as a guarded privilege, not as an inherent human right, and those desiring to leave are still considered pawns in a game with the West over trade and international image-making. Officials claimed that many fundamental legal reforms would be accomplished within the current reform campaign, but the delegation thinks it is very unlikely that total—and arbitrary—state control over emigration will be weakened in the years ahead.

Freedom of religion

An important measure of the Soviet Government's seriousness in significantly changing its human rights practices is its policy on freedom of conscience, most clearly expressed by its treatment of religion. The delegation met with Jews, Pentecostals, and Russian Orthodox Christians to discuss the current official policy towards religion in the Soviet Union.

Judging from the experiences of the religious believers who met with the delegation, the difficulties suffered by different religious groups in the Soviet Union vary more in degree than in kind. One thing stressed by both the Orthodox and Pentecostalist believers is that treatment of believers varies from place to place, and little is known of conditions in vast areas of the Soviet Union. It is generally believed that repression of religion and persecution of believers can be far harsher in the more remote parts of the country.

All religions suffer from a legal code that severely retricts religious education and association, while condoning atheist and anti-religious activity and propaganda. The key restrictions are contained in a 1929 decree and several articles of the RSFSR criminal code. Believers have been jailed under both political and religious articles.

To get the perspective of the official Russian Orthodox church, the delegation met with the Metropolitan Philaret of Minsk, head of the External Relations Department of the Moscow Patriarchate, at the Danilovskiy Monastery, recently restored to Church control and currently under renovation. Most observers interpret this

transfer as one of the official actions designed to enhance the image of religious tolerance in the Soviet Union in anticipation of the celebration of 1,000 years of Russian Christianity in 1988.

When queried about such things as the adequacy of religious training for clergy, availability of Bibles, and general status of religion, Metropolitan Philaret responded with bland assurances that everything was fine. Overall, the image of the official church presented by Philaret corresponded closely to the characterization offered by foreign observers and other Russian Orthodox believers—compromised, weak, and materially well cared for.

Following the meeting with Philaret, the delegation met with a group of Russian Orthodox believers and clergy. Present were two prominent activists, Father Gleb Yakunin and Alexander Ogorodnikov. The group stressed that Gorbachev's reform program, known as glasnost (publicity) in relation to openess in the media and peryestroyka (restructuring) with reference to economic and political change, had yet to touch religion. While known arrests of believers have virtually stopped, many believers remain in prison, the laws inhibiting religious activities remain on the books, and in general believers still live like second-class citizens.

The major problems facing religious believers in the Soviet Union, according to the group of Orthodox believers, are severe shortages of religious literature and Bibles, prohibitions on religious instruction of children, confinement of all religious activities to registered places, and tight restrictions on social association between believers.

The shortage of Bibles and religious literature was of particular concern to the Orthodox believers, and also was a problem for others, such as Jews and Pentecostals, who met the delegation. The Orthodox cited black market prices of 30–100 rubles for Bibles as evidence of a severe shortage. In addition, they claimed there was a total lack of children's Bibles, save for a few copies printed abroad and smuggled into the Soviet Union. The Orthodox cited instances in which Bibles or other religious materials were seized by the police during harassment of believers.

A certain number of Bibles in Russian and other languages of the Soviet Union are imported into the U.S.S.R. According to Metropolitan Philaret, there is no shortage of Bibles in the U.S.S.R. He claimed that the fifth Bible printing since the Russian Revolution, now underway, would produce 150,000 Russian-language Bibles. While it is not possible to confirm this number or details of the Bibles' distribution, it is clearly an inadequate printing in a country thought to have tens of millions of Christian believers.

Under the 1929 decree on religious cults and articles of the current criminal code, religious believers of all faiths are forbidden to instruct any but their own children on religious matters. This effectively inhibits religious education, and added to the social pressures faced by children to avoid religious beliefs, makes propagation of religious faith very difficult.

The degree of pressure faced by believers is illustrated by an assertion by the Orthodox who met the delegation that the ban on religious association outside registered places would make a sewing circle among women believers an illegal activity subject to police disruption. The requirement that all group activities by believers

take place within a registered church building assists in the state's surveillance of religion, as KGB agents or citizens responsive to KGB pressures are infiltrated throughout registered religious organizations.

The compromised state of the official Orthodox Church is of great concern to Father Yakunin and other Orthodox believers. Yakunin sees the current period as one of historic opportunity for the Church to improve its status within society. Yakunin and others are convinced that Gorbachev has made overtures to the Church to join in the peryestroyka program to revitalize Soviet society. Yakunin cited several incidents in which Communist Party leaders inquired of Church leaders as to their plans for contributing to restructuring, only to be disappointed by timid and irrelevant responses from the Church hierarchy. Yakunin and some other Orthodox fear that an historic opportunity to improve religious life in the Soviet Union may be missed if Gorbachev's reform program is not extended to the religious sphere.

Another concern of the Orthodox believers is that the upcoming millennium celebration of Russian Christianity in 1988 will serve as a show-piece for foreign visitors to convince them that the Church is vigorous and unfettered in the Soviet Union. Believers appear to be divided on the question of whether foreign religious leaders should visit the U.S.S.R. for the millennium.

This division also applies to efforts to improve religious life under Gorbachev. Father Yakunin and his followers represent the moderate school, which believes there is room within Gorbachev's reform initiatives for liberalization of religious policy, if it is worked right. More radical activists such as Alexander Ogorodnikov believe that the Soviet Communist Party's fundamental hostility towards religion has not changed, and must be confronted with uncompromising positions based on principle. Ogorodnikov reportedly refused to remove a gold cross he wore around his neck, even after torture from prison guards, an indication of the determination of some religious activists.

To a great extent, this division among religious activists is mirrored in other parts of the dissident community, where there is disagreement over how much dissidents should cooperate with officials in attempting to increase the scope for expression of religious, political, and other rights.

The delegation's meeting with Vasiliy Barats provided graphic confirmation of the problems described by the Russian Orthodox believers. The Pentecostals suffer severe difficulties because of their location in the more remote areas of the Soviet Union, the absence of any link to specific national, ethnic, or regional traditions, and frequently hostile popular reactions to their fundamentalist practices. In addition, Soviet Pentecostals have sought emigration, which has put them even futher outside the bounds of normal Soviet society and made them the target of harsh KGB harassment and imprisonment. An overriding concern of Barats and other Pentecostals is that they, unlike members of other religious faiths in the U.S.S.R., lack a network of foreign supporters to keep their plight before the eyes of world opinion. Given the large and vigorous evangelical community in the West and the United States in particular, Barats found this absence of support very disturbing.

Other smaller sects such as the Hare Krishnas are known to suffer severe persecution in the Soviet Union, but detailed information about their condition is difficult to obtain. Believers who met with the delegation pointed to the treatment of Hare Krishnas as an example of how harsh Soviet policy can become towards small, geographically isolated groups who lack foreign interest or support.

Based on the delegation's discussions with Orthodox, Pentecostal, and Jewish religious believers, it seemed clear that the reform program now underway has yet to lighten the burden of repression on religious life. When these issues were raised with Soviet officials, they repeated their claims that efforts were underway to improve Soviet society generally by correcting mistakes made in the past. However, they were unable to offer any assurances that the legal basis for persecution of religious believers would be removed, or that Communist Party policy toward religion would improve. The prospects for increased freedom of conscience in the Soviet Union would have to be rated as very uncertain.

Freedom of expression

The delegation met with a group of writers, many of them recently released from prison or camp, who intend to publish a journal covering human rights in the Soviet Union. The group, led by Sergei Grigoryants, met with the delegation in Grigoryants' apartment. Also present were Lev Timofeyev, Yuri Kronopolou, and Nikolai Lyushin.

The group has announced its intention to publish its journal, entitled Glasnost, with or without official permission. However, they said they intend to first seek official sanction for the publication. This approach, bold for the Soviet context, reflects one approach by the dissident community to Gorbachev. This approach takes Gorbachev at his word and attempts to exploit the political opening created by Gorbachev's announced reform program to advance the human rights agenda.

The delegation was shown a copy of the first edition of Glasnost. Its contents seemed very explosive—articles on the abuse of psychiatric hospitals against political prisoners, the plight of Jewish refuseniks, the need for independent publishing in the U.S.S.R., an interview on human rights with Andrei Sakharov.

As with other groups of dissidents that met the delegation, the Glasnost group was divided on many issues relating to Gorbachev's reform campaign. Grigoryants displayed some enthusiasm about the opportunities presented by Gorbachev's initiatives, while Timofeyev seemed more cautious and skeptical about proposals to "democratize" Soviet political life. Notwithstanding differences on specific issues, however, all the writers seemed to agree that Gorbachev's initiative had changed the atmosphere in the Soviet Union in their favor.

For example, Grigoryants asserted that dissident writers no longer felt like victims, but like a part of the national process of revitalization. Gorbachev's emphasis on change, and his derisive approach to those who defend the inertia of Soviet economic and political life, have given dissidents a morale boost that is leading to such innovative steps as the journal Glasnost. The group agreed, however, that the Soviet Communist Party, including Gorbachev's

circle, may not be ready for many of the things they have called for in public speeches.

For this group of writers, one way of showing seriousness about changing human rights policies would be for the government to repeal Articles 70 and 190 of the RSFSR Criminal Code, which deal with anti-Soviet agitation and slander. These are the articles under which most political activists are jailed in the Soviet Union. Another key move would be to release more political prisoners. Roughly 160 of an announced total of 280 political cases under review had led to prisoner releases by the time of the visit to Moscow. The number of political prisoners still incarcerated is unknown, but the writers expressed the opinion that many of the over 600 well-documented prisoners of conscience would have to be released to establish the serious intentions of the Gorbachev Government.

While the group viewed political inertia as an enormous obstacle to real change in the USSR, they seemed to recognize Gorbachev's dependence on urban intellectuals in generating pressure for reform. They hoped that the government would realize the need for independent, creative political thought such as that which will be published in the journal Glasnost, which they view as contributing to Gorbachev's campaign for reform.

The writers planned to seek a meeting with Alexander Yakovlev, Central Committee secretary in charge of propaganda and an architect of the glasnost policy, to ask official sanction for their publishing venture. While such approval seemed unlikely, the attempt did reflect the enthusiasm and unbowed determination of the writers to pursue independent political expression despite their experiences of imprisonment and persecution. The group planned to proceed with publication with or without official sanction.

The delegation discussed the policy of glasnost with several official Soviets, including *Izvestiya* commentator Alexander Bovin and Central Committee analyst Fyodor Burlatskiy. Bovin asserted that he had long favored the more objective, candid approach to reporting which was now showing up in Soviet media. He acknowledged that coverage of foreign topics still suffers from a propagandistic approach, but predicted that this coverage will become more objective "very soon." Consistent with this view, Bovin said he had long favored an end to jamming of all foreign radio broadcasting. While the delegation was in Moscow, an end to jamming of the Voice of America was announced, following an end to jamming of the BBC. Jamming of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty was to continue.

Bovin cited "telebridges," in which American and Soviet television audiences participated in live broadcasts, as a good example of how glasnost can promote U.S.-Soviet relations. He denounced such shows as "Amerika," for inflaming anti-Soviet feelings. Finally, Bovin noted that glasnost had many opponents in the Soviet bureaucracy and in Soviet society, and that implementing the policy will be a struggle.

Burlatskiy called glasnost the most important current component of the reform program, because it was helping to create new ways of thinking and new political interest groups and institutions. Burlatskiy told the delegation that the Soviet people had to be able to read about the economic achievements of the West, of Japan, even

of some developing countries like Brazil, in order to develop a more sophisticated basis for action in their own society. Soviets also need glasnost, according to Burlatskiy, to learn to live with diversity and debate, from which they have been shielded by 70 years of stilted, propagandistic journalism.

Asked about limits to glasnost, both Bovin and Burlatskiy said there were no rules per se, just a system of experimentation and trial and error. Burlatskiy predicted that there would be a new press law attempting to institutionalize more objective journalism.

When Senator Heinz pressed Bulatskiy on the issue of the use of psychiatry to commit dissidents to mental hospitals, Burlatskiy indicated that he knew of neither evidence nor even accusations about such practices but would investigate. Senator Heinz delivered substantial documentation to Burlatskiy the next day, but as yet no reply or follow-up has been received.

While there are still limits, albeit undefined, to glasnost, the current openness and candor of the Soviet media clearly have imparted new energy and interest to Soviet political life. So far, it is not clear that Gorbachev sees glasnost as anything more than an adjunct to his economic reform campaign, intended to shake up inefficient sectors and unmask corruption and incompetence. While this is welcome from the point of view of freedom of expression, the delegation left with serious doubts that glasnost would soon extend to the discussion of sensitive political matters like political prisoners or government infringement on the legally-guaranteed rights of Soviet citizens.

Democratization and Economic Reform

The delegation heard varying assessments of the nature and prospects of political and economic reform under Gorbachev. As noted above, many in the dissident community are divided over what the reform initiatives may mean for human rights practices. They are also divided over the proper response of the activist sector: should they continue to make maximal demands, or should they try to use the opening created by Gorbachev to push a human rights agenda?

Among officials with whom the delegation met, there seemed to be a uniformly positive approach to democratization and peryestroyka, the term generally applied to economic reform.

Fyodor Burlatskiy, who once served as an adviser to Khrushchev and is now among Gorbachev's brain trust, offered useful insights into all aspects of the current restructuring program. He set the stage for his analysis by contrasting the cautious, consistent approach of Gorbachev with the more spontaneous, disorganized reform efforts of Nikita Khrushchev. In Burlatskiy's view (one shared by Deputy Foreign Minister Bessmertnykh), Khrushchev lacked a well thought-through program, and his experimentation aroused concern while failing to exploit widespread perceptions of a need for change.

Burlatskiy and Bessmertnykh agreed that Gorbachev's efforts were based on a recognition that the Soviet Union had reached a crisis stage because it continued to manage its society on a "war communism" model, adopted in the early years after the Revolu-

tion. Meanwhile, inescapable laws of economics that called for reliance on decentralization and individual initiative were ignored, and stagnation finally reached the point where something had to be done. Burlatskiy asserted that the struggle between the "war communism" model and the more liberal outlines of the New Economic Policy adopted in Lenin's last years continues, and will continue for the forseeable future.

According to Burlatskiy, Gorbachev's reform program blends political and economic change in order to maintain a balance between the two. He cited Poland as an example where political reform had outstripped economic change, and China as an example of the opposite problem.

One of Burlatskiy's most interesting points was his assertion that Soviet political culture presents the major obstacle to real change. Burlatskiy asserted that years of centralized rule and cult of personality had destroyed Soviet society's ability to cope with choice and diversity, and had also led to an atrophy of political institutions, which should represent independent sources of ideas and opinion.

Burlatskiy lamented the fact that the political opening under Gorbachev had already led to communal strife among groups not accustomed to a less controlled environment. For example, groups of urban youth who resent foreign influences (named "lyuberi," after the Moscow suburb where they originated) have clashed with youth imitating Western punk rock lifestyles, and a group known as "Pamyat" (memory) has started promoting xenophobic and chauvinistic Russian values in the name of cultural preservation. In the absence of well-defined rules, Burlatskiy fears, such "political hooliganism" may increase.

The lack of rules for the new atmosphere is evident in the area of "democratization," the term applied to efforts to increase choice and diversity in the selection of political and managerial personnel. Burlatskiy noted that experiments with multiple candidate elections, in which there were more choices on the ballot than positions to be filled, had spawned unworkable situations in which too many candidates were nominated and voters were faced with confusing situations.

Overall, Burlatskiy said, there was great excitement about the prospects for multiple-candidate elections, but very little understanding of how to run such a system smoothly or efficiently. The delegation inquired about limits on terms of service for elected officials, and the power of superiors or outsiders to fire incompetent managers elected to positions in economic enterprises. Burlatskiy recalled that he had once drafted a law for Khrushchev that would have limited the terms of Politburo members, but that it had gone nowhere.

Another element of democratization more directly linked to Western concepts of human rights is reform of the Soviet legal system. Burlatskiy noted that there were proposals for such reform being drafted, and that they would address the rights of defendants in Soviet courts. Burlatskiy noted that he had seen one draft, and that it left much to be desired. He was not able to discuss in detail what such reform might entail. It was difficult for the delegation to imagine significant reform in this area, as it would directly chal-

lenge the power of the Communist Party and government in relation to Soviet citizens. Nonetheless, in Burlatskiy's mind the legal reform was part and parcel of the reform program which aimed at reducing corruption and abuse of government power.

While Burlatskiy evidenced a sincere enthusiasm for significant reform in the Soviet economic and political system, there were clearly limits to even his openness. When asked about the continuing incarceration of Soviet political prisoners in psychiatric hospitals, Burlatskiy professed ignorance of the situation. This was a question which met with a similar response from all officials queried by the delegation. While Burlatskiy said there were no known limits to glasnost, it appears the delegation was able to discover at least one such limit.

One common observation backed up by Burlatskiy is the idea that Gorbachev needs a success in negotiating an agreement on the removal of U.S. and Soviet intermediate-range nuclear missiles in Europe to provide him political momentum to carry out his domestic program.

Prospects for Change

There is little doubt that there are many high-level Soviet officials who seek major changes in Soviet economic and political life. They are armed with a strong, stable and attractive leader who is cautious in implementing a reform program that seeks to address the fundamental sources of stagnation in the Soviet Union. After so many years of stagnation on so many levels, it will clearly take time for the Soviets to implement major changes, and to elaborate new rules of behavior. And the depth and diversity of opposition to change cannot be underestimated.

With respect to human rights, the current Soviet record is mixed, with a continuation of many of the most objectionable policies directed against Soviet citizens who seek to exercise freedom of conscience, expression, or emigration.

To the extent that emigration represents a direct threat to the ultimate authority of the state, the prospects for fundamental change in emigration policy seem dim. The current upsurge in Jewish emigration is to be welcomed, but given the concurrent difficulties of the Pentacostals and other Soviets seeking emigration, it appears that recognition of emigration as an inherent right is not in prospect. So far there is no evidence to show that the new Soviet decree on emigration heralds a basic shift in the treatment of Soviet would-be emigres as pawns for use in dealings with the West. If this proves correct, the need for a strong campaign of pressure on the emigration issue will continue.

The bright spot in current Soviet human rights practices would appear to be attitudes toward open and candid expression. While its implicit limits are still far short of those common in Western societies, glasnost does represent progress in the Soviet context. Whether such flexibility extends to unofficial bodies such as the Glasnost writers group remains to be seen. One important measure of the progress of this openness policy is whether more candid journalism will be allowed to contribute to the improvement of other human rights practices through exposure and publicity.

As a measure of fundamental intentions, Soviet practice on freedom of conscience is most revealing. And in this area, aside from the limited release of some political prisoners, there is as yet no important progress. The legal and bureaucratic basis for the persecution of religious believers is intact. Despite some informal signals of conciliation to the hierarchy of the Russian Orthodox Church, there is no evidence that the fundamental hostility to religion inherited from previous regimes has changed. The coming years will test the theory that Gorbachev needs the moral support of religion in his drive to reinvigorate Soviet society. In the meantime, continuing persecution of religion indicates the most fundamental human right, freedom of thought, is not yet on the agenda of reform.

In summary, the human rights changes under Mikhail Gorbachev have been real and significant, but have been of a partial, and not fundamental, nature. Based on the 4-day visit to Moscow, the delegation could not predict with confidence that improvements in official Soviet human rights practices will go beyond those minimally necessary to assist General Secretary Gorbachev's primary objective of economic revitalization. As such, these practices will continue to shape Western perceptions of the Soviet Union and United States policies toward that country.

JOHN HEINZ.

DELEGATION OF THE U.S. SENATE

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